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FIRST COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORK FOR TAJIKISTAN (1999-2000)

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INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with Executive Board decision 93/3, UNDP began its operations in Tajikistan in December 1993. Due to the instability of the political and social environment, activities were initially limited primarily to humanitarian assistance at the grass-roots level. As a consequence of a ceasefire, other activities were launched to support the peace process. Given the unstable political situation and armed conflict in the country over the past five to six years, a UNDP advisory note could not be completed until recently, thus delaying the submission of the first country cooperation framework (CCF), which covers the period 1999-2000, to the Executive Board. Over the past year, consultations were held with the Government, United Nations agencies, Bretton Woods institutions, the donor community, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and a broad range of representatives of civil society.

I. DEVELOPMENT SITUATION FROM A SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

2. After prolonged negotiations, with major involvement of the United Nations, between the Government and the United Tajik Opposition, a peace agreement was signed in Moscow in July 1997. This agreement, the General Agreement on Establishing Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan (General Agreement), is the basis for putting the country on the path to stability, prosperity and sustainable human development, even if in its implementation many elements move more slowly forward than planned. Matters of security continue to be a particular concern.

3. Since the country's independence in 1991, Tajikistan has been faced with new daunting challenges: the urgency of political restructuring and the democratization process; the need for the reorganization of the economy and transition to a market-oriented system; and the need to respond to rising socio-economic expectations and civil war that followed the implementation of the peace process via the General Agreement. Efforts to tackle these challenges have heavily influenced development activities of the post-independence period.

4. According to World Bank data, more than 80 per cent of the population of Tajikistan lives in absolute poverty. The 1998 UNDP-supported national human development report indicates that, in spite of modest economic growth (1.7 per cent) in 1997, poverty eradication continues to be a major issue. The Economic Reform Programme for the period 1995-2000 contains provisions to address poverty, and land-lease activities have been advocated as an immediate modality for alleviating rural poverty. In the Human Development Report 1998, Tajikistan ranked 118 among 174 countries according to its human development index value, in sharp contrast to 1993, when it was ranked 88 out of 173 countries.

5. With industries either closed or producing at anywhere from 10 to 40 per cent, the agricultural sector declining steadily, and high unemployment (30 per cent, according to the Ministry of Labour), Tajikistan faces major economic challenges. Rural populations account for 64.7 per cent of the total

number of people unemployed, and 17.1 per cent of those people have been unemployed for more than one year. Female unemployment is at 52.5 per cent, and youth unemployment at 59.1 per cent. Employment centres are able to place only one third of the applicants, driving job seekers to informal employment or employment outside of Tajikistan. Accelerated progress on small-scale income-generating activities and privatization of land as well as State-controlled industries are considered as essential issues by both the Government and international donors.

6. The war resulted in as many as 25,000 widows and 17,000 households headed by single mothers. Women have also suffered disproportionately from the political instability, economic decline and the collapse of the State social safety net. This has exacerbated the social and economic environment, which was already biased against women, leaving them in a highly disadvantaged condition. Increasingly, there are fewer and fewer women in decision-making positions. Young girls and women are slowly being marginalized, losing the economic and educational opportunities that had been available pre-independence, and which are guaranteed under the Constitution. Gender equity remains a serious issue to be addressed at all levels.

7. Tajikistan has recently begun to develop a national action programme. Environmental issues include pollution, soil erosion, deforestation and water resources management. The latter also has serious regional impact, since Tajikistan is the source of most Central Asian rivers (approximately 50 per cent). With only 7 per cent arable land and 70 per cent of the population without access to potable water, soil erosion and water management are vital issues. Unfortunately, limited finances within the national budget do not permit attacking the issues to the degree required.

II. RESULTS AND LESSONS OF PAST COOPERATION

8. During the period 1994-1998, UNDP activities focused on facilitating the transition from relief to longer-term development through support to the Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Development Programme, which was designed as a post-conflict community-based rehabilitation and construction programme with the United Nations Office for Project Services as the executing agency. The objectives were: the promotion of community-based peace- and confidence-building; human resource development and national capacity-building; gender mainstreaming, aid coordination and mobilization; and the production of national human development reports. Those areas conformed to both the needs identified with the Government and key concerns of UNDP, and the activities undertaken were also the most realistic in view of the prevailing security and political environment at that time, since they contributed directly to stabilizing the situation in the country at a time when longer-term development was not yet possible.

9. The signing of the General Agreement in mid-1997 contributed to a more positive enabling environment for longer-term initiatives, which, in turn, permitted UNDP to begin formulating an advisory note, taking into account its past activities. Evaluations confirmed that considering the situation in Tajikistan, UNDP should focus on (a) the special political and social demands of

the peace process and the local communities, and (b) the need for strategic linkages between UNDP development activities and the humanitarian work of other United Nations agencies and the donor community. All this resulted in a core of revised projects, mainly in support of peace and stability.

10. Government and UNDP consultations with all parties involved, including the United Nations system, stressed the need for UNDP to: (a) help to create, at the national level, policy reforms aimed at establishing an enabling environment for the development activities of other agencies; (b) provide support for NGOs and grass-roots organizations at the community level; and (c) facilitate regional cooperation to promote international advocacy activities in support of the peace process.

11. The peace process is fragile and in need of proactive strengthening through political support and investment in development. Political stability is by far the overriding prerequisite for the survival and sustainable development of the country. Yet political stability also requires substantive development support to the parties involved in the civil conflict; in other words, development activities themselves become a stabilizing factor. Major efforts towards rehabilitation of the conflict-affected areas, including investment for reconstruction, are essential elements. Equally important is the promotion of peace and confidence-building in the communities affected by the war. The activities during the period 1994-1998 illustrated the necessity for a great degree of management flexibility, to ensure that project activities continue in spite of the temporary security issues inherent to the peace process. In this light, it has been noted that the UNDP-supported Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Development Programme, with its particular field management structure and implementation modalities, is the best-suited vehicle through which community projects should be implemented in support of peace.

12. UNDP, like most international agencies, initially concentrated its activities in regions affected the most by the civil conflict. This is now changing and UNDP, in agreement with the Government, is promoting a more balanced distribution of activities throughout the country, since the issues of governance and community empowerment are common to the whole country.

III. PROPOSED STRATEGY AND THEMATIC AREAS

13. The overriding national strategy is to ensure that the peace process gradually leads to stability in the country as a precondition for longer-term sustainable human development. For this reason, and taking into account lessons learned, UNDP will concentrate its assistance in three main areas that bridge the political and institutional adaptation from a country at war to one in peace: governance; rehabilitation, reconstruction and development; and the sustainable management of natural resources.

14. The current situation in the country permits a dual focus: (a) support to the peace process through support for governance, rehabilitation and development, which are mutually reinforcing, and (b) launching initial activities in support of longer-term resource sustainability.

A. Governance

15. This area of concentration reflects the leadership's willingness and commitment to the peace process, as well as the dedication of UNDP to promoting the process through material and technical support to both the Government and the Commission for National Reconciliation (CNR). The CNR was established as part of the General Agreement and charged with overall responsibility for implementing the peace accord and to strengthen the role of civil society in governance. UNDP will therefore cooperate with the Government and Commission for National Reconciliation in the following main areas:

(a) Democratization and the rule of law, through support for the implementation of a civic education campaign for the election, the preparation of information and training materials for political parties, the training of media journalists to promote independent media, and support for Internet access for academic and research institutions and media;

(b) Civic education, through support for the dissemination of civic education materials on human rights, gender issues and the democratic process, the training of civic education facilitators and the establishment of community development centres for the dissemination of information, and support for women's voter groups.

16. In addition, and in support of the above, specific activities in the areas of public administration reform, external resource management and gender-focused initiatives will be promoted in addition to preparation of 1999 and 2000 national human development reports.

17. Impact. The expected impact of activities in the area of governance include: better synergy between the role of civil society and the role of the Government of Tajikistan, involving national institutions essential to ensure the peace process, aid coordination, resource mobilization and efforts to address gender-related issues by the Government.

B. Rehabilitation, reconstruction and development

18. UNDP support is envisaged in four sub-areas that have been identified as priorities by the Government as well as local communities, and which represent an expansion on current UNDP activities. It should be noted that, in strategic terms, these interventions strongly support the implementation of the General Agreement, while also helping to create an enabling environment for other activities that would build communities' capacities to cope with the new social, economic and political environment.

19. The following initiatives will be strengthened:

(a) The rehabilitation and reconstruction of war-affected communities, through the creation of local development committees responsible for the identification of needs and supervision of implementing key basic infrastructure in war-affected communities;

(b) Peace and confidence-building, through the organization of community development centres and NGO support centres and support to the creation of a national NGO secretariat;

(c) Private sector promotion, through management training, advisory and support services for existing, emerging and new entrepreneurs, including the establishment of credit lines, and support to women entrepreneurs and female-headed households. These activities will inspire confidence that the country is increasingly stable after the crisis;

(d) Reintegration of ex-combatants, through the implementation of labour-intensive public works and income-generating projects, skills training schemes associated with the private sector, and employment promotion as indicated above.

20. Impact. The expected impact in the area of rehabilitation, reconstruction and development includes: the empowerment of communities, increased overall impact of rehabilitation and economic initiatives, and improvement in the security situation, which will also increase the movement of people and goods throughout the country.

C. Sustainable management of natural resources

21. Considering the limited available resources at this time, the Ministry of Environment, with UNDP, will focus on water resources management and, as funding permits, new areas such as erosion control, reforestation, etc.

22. Specifically, the following initiatives and outputs are envisaged: (a) public water resources management-awareness campaigns; (b) training of national authorities at national and local levels in water resources management; and (c) mobilization of community-based organizations, local NGOs and communities towards more responsible use of water resources. Particular emphasis will be placed on women's groups within communities, since women are the primary users of communal water facilities and play an important educational role at the household level.

23. Impact. The expected impact in the area of sustainable management of natural resources include: the increased awareness of the Government, leading, in turn, to the development of relevant legislative and policy reforms supporting water-use management, including a system for enforcing water usage fees and increased community awareness of broader environmental issues linked to proper water management (erosion, soil degradation, pollution, etc.).

IV. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

24. Coordination. The Government expects the UNDP country office to continue to play an active role in supporting the coordination of development and humanitarian activities by strengthening the Government's capacity to manage external resources and by maintaining a consultative dialogue with the United Nations/donor/NGO community. UNDP will continue to help the Government to collect, update and disseminate information on development cooperation.

25. Considering that the UNDP Resident Representative in his capacity of United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator is also the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the UNDP office plays a major role in coordination together with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

26. Execution and implementation. In the medium to long term, national execution will be the principal execution modality for UNDP-supported projects, to be achieved through training and assistance. Until such a time, national authorities will be assisted by United Nations agencies and international experts recruited from the region in the area of training and in the execution of their programmes and projects.

27. A range of partners will be involved both in policy and strategy activities as well as implementation. These include the World Bank, the European Union, the European Community Humanitarian Office, the United States Agency for International Development, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Volunteer programme, and both local and international NGOs, such as the Aga Khan Foundation.

28. Monitoring and evaluation. All activities will be subject to regular UNDP monitoring and evaluation procedures, including progress and technical reporting, meetings and monitoring visits. Ad hoc assessments will be undertaken whenever there is a change in the security or political environment that either hinders or blocks the implementation of activities. In addition, activities will be reviewed annually by a Local Project Advisory Committee. The Government has also requested that the country office support continuous improvement in impact measurement. The CCF will be evaluated in 2000.

29. Resource mobilization. So far the deterioration of the security situation, although a natural part of any peace process, has had a negative effect on donors. Currently, new resources to complement those of the United Nations system and the few resident donors are not forthcoming. Therefore, in view of the substantial need for financial resources for rehabilitation and development in Tajikistan, and taking into account the limited results of traditional fund-raising instruments such as international donor conferences and consolidated appeal processes, the Government intends to make resource mobilization one of its highest priorities with UNDP.

Annex

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION TARGET TABLE FOR TAJIKISTAN (1999-2000)

(In thousands of United States dollars)

Source	Amount	Comments
UNDP CORE FUNDS		
Estimated carry-over into 1999	639	
TRAC 1.1.1	3 339	Assigned immediately to country.
TRAC 1.1.2	0 to 66.7 per cent of TRAC 1.1.1	This range of percentages is presented for initial planning purposes only. The actual assignment will depend on the availability of high-quality programmes. Any increase in the range of percentages would also be subject to availability of resources.
SPPD/STS	105	
Subtotal	4 083[a]	
NON-CORE FUNDS		
Government cost-sharing	5 000	
Sustainable development funds	-	
Third-party cost-sharing	-	
Funds, trust funds and other	4 372	Poverty Strategy Initiative
Subtotal	9 372	
GRAND TOTAL	13 455[a]	

[a] Not inclusive of TRAC 1.1.2, which is allocated regionally for subsequent country application.

Abbreviations: SPPD = support for policy and programme development; STS = support for technical services; and TRAC = target for resource assignment from the core.